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ABSTRACT

This annual report of the Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development (NERCRD) highlights the Center's activities, programs, projects, and publications for fiscal year 1998. NERCRD receives modest funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and other funds from private foundations. Funds are used to link rural development efforts of the 15 land grant institutions in the region. The region encompasses the District of Columbia and 12 states: Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts, Maryland, Maine, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and West Virginia. The five goals that guided programming for 1998 include: (1) improving economic competitiveness and diversification; (2) supporting management and strategic planning for economic investment; (3) creating capacity through leadership; (4) assisting in family and community adjustments to stress and change; and (5) promoting constructive use of the environment. This report profiles 29 research and extension projects that address such areas as rural community development, rural poverty, distance learning, 4-H environmental programs, and sustainable development. Each profile includes contact information and Web addresses, where available. Contains author index and key word index. (CDS)

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The Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development

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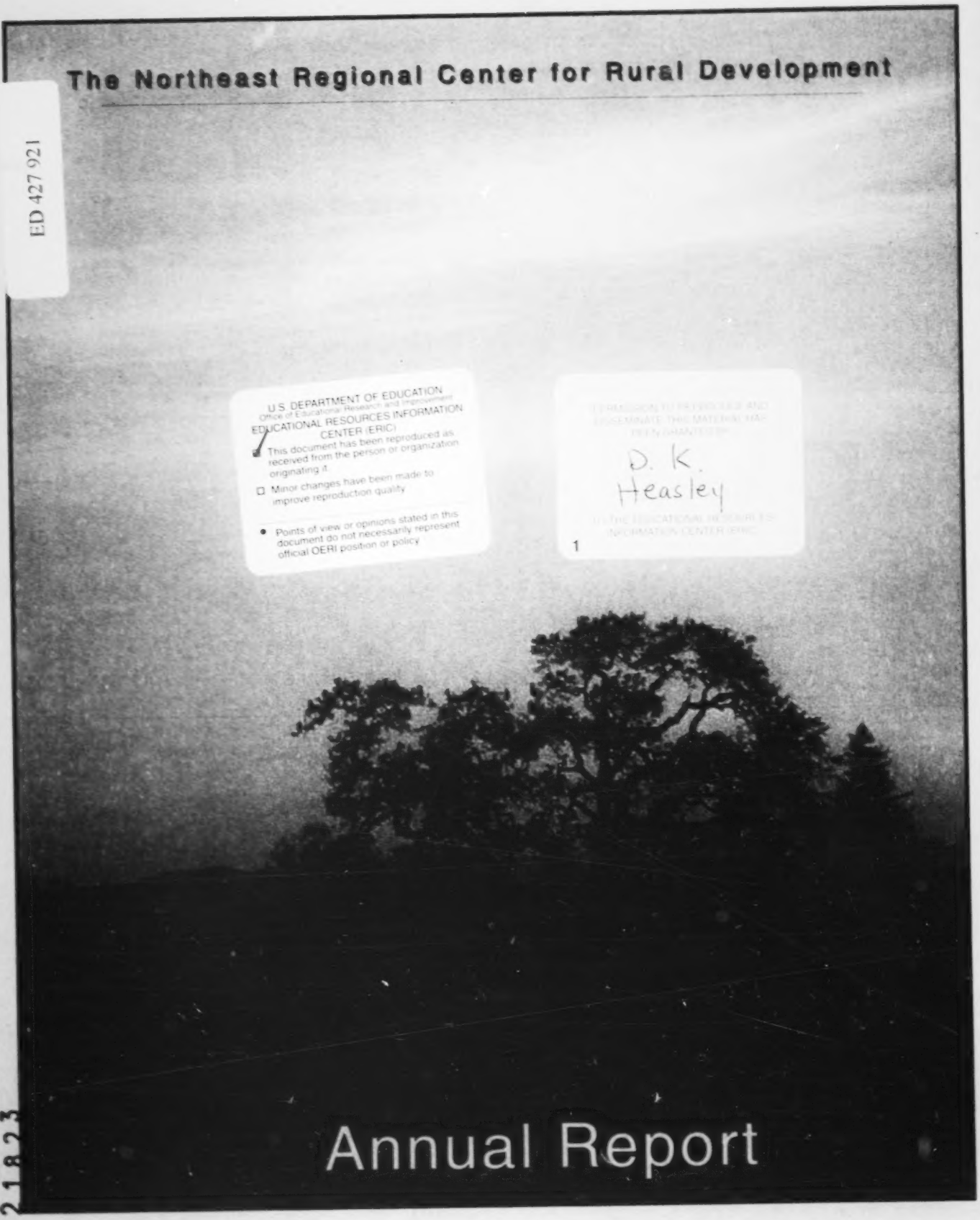

Annual Report

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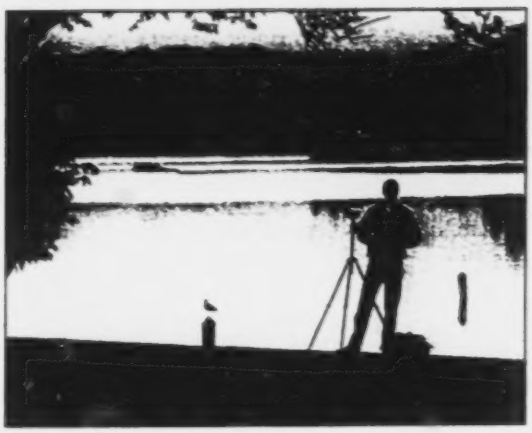


Introduction

With one-quarter of the nation's population living in rural areas, there is a need to invest in research and education to help rural people and their communities meet the challenges and opportunities that exist in today's global society. The land grant institutions have a long history of applied scholarship, and an established presence helping rural communities deal with issues.

About the Northeast Center

The Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development (Northeast Center) receives modest funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture through the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service. Additional funds are secured from private foundations to further the efforts of special projects. Funds are used to link the rural development efforts of the fifteen land grant institutions in the region to encourage and support regional cooperation. The region encompasses twelve states and the District of Columbia. The twelve states are Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts, Maryland, Maine, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont and West Virginia.

The Northeast Center is guided by a technical advisory committee and governed by a board of directors.

The technical advisory committee is composed of faculty from the region's 1862 and 1890 land grant institutions, a representative from the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service—USDA, and an executive director of a state rural development council within the region. The technical advisory committee reviews letters of intent and proposals, evaluates and recommends research and extension projects and priorities to the board of directors.

The board of directors is composed of administrators from the region's 1862 and 1890 land grant institutions; Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service—USDA; Economic Research Service—USDA; and public and private sectors. The board establishes policies and sets programming emphases.

The Northeast Center serves two primary audiences: direct users and end users. Direct users are the professionals conducting research and developing and delivering educational programs. End users are rural communities and rural people who benefit from the programs.

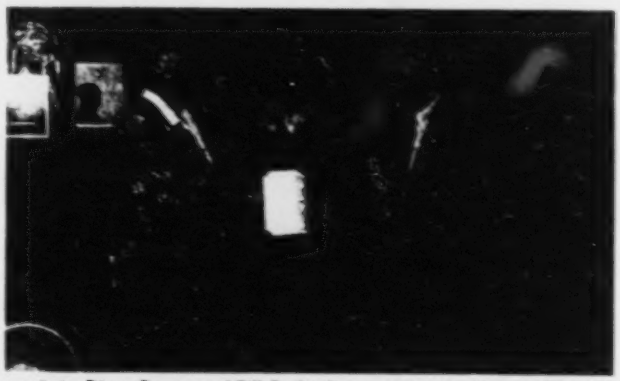
For more than twenty years, the Northeast Center and its counterparts in the other regions have supported and strengthened rural communities through their multidisciplinary network of university research and extension faculty, and their liaisons with state, regional and national policy makers, community decision makers, and other rural development professionals. The Northeast Center provides seed money for projects that are multi-state, regional or national in scope, awards mini-grants to creatively expand innovative extension programs, and evaluates research methods currently operating within the region. Extension mini-grants may be used to enhance program materials, make materials available in new formats (using new electronic technology), expand implementation to new locations or to new audiences, or as matching funds to leverage new resources.

The five goals that guided programming for fiscal year 98 include:

- To Improve Economic Competitiveness and Diversification
- To Support Management and Strategic Planning for Economic Investment
- To Create Capacity Through Leadership
- To Assist in Family and Community Adjustments to Stress and Change
- To Promote Constructive Use of the Environment

The Northeast Center's annual report provides insight into the people and organizations involved in the development of its activities, programs, projects and publications each year. This report is organized by a table of contents and indexed by keywords and authors. Contact information is provided to encourage information sharing. Project information was edited for wider readability. Whenever possible, we retained the voice/words of each author to illustrate the diversity of players represented.

This publication is available on the Northeast Center's Web site: (http://www.cas.nercrd.psu.edu/). We invite you to use any of the information from our electronic or printed media. Additional copies of reports or other publications can be obtained by contacting the Northeast Center. Please cite the Northeast Center whenever reprinting materials and submit a copy to us for our files.



Board co-chairs Diane Brown and Bill Saylor honor out-going director Daryl Heasley with a plaque in commemoration of his thirteen years of service to the Northeast Center during the board of directors meeting held at the Toftrees Hotel, State College, Pennsylvania, October 24-25, 1998.

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Building on Community Assets to Increase Workforce Capacity (Extension)

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Highlights:

- Only 24% of the states have work force preparation in their extension plans of work.
- A regional conference will help extension educators to implement workforce preparation plans for local communities.
- Conference results will appear on the USDA's Web site (http://www.reeusda.gov/wfp/).

Members of Cooperative Extension's Workforce Preparation Initiative Team are concerned with the changing pace of today's work world and the challenges faced by employers, workers, educators and government officials to adapt to these rapid changes. The demands for increased worker competency in all sectors of the workforce are rising faster than the response rates of any company, group of workers or educational system. The world economy is in the midst of a new era driven by technology, global competition and the resulting pressure for increased productivity. The result has changed not only how we work, but also the type of workforce needed to be competitive.

Employees need to be better educated and capable of mastering technical skills within a continuous learning process as major sectors of the economy shift from labor-intensive operations to high value-added processes. Workforce preparedness has become a critical factor in economic competitiveness. Many employers are facing the reality that the lack of qualified employees limits future economic viability.

workforce preparation

Northeast Center funds will be used for planning and implementing a regional conference designed to increase extension educators' leadership/facilitator skills, to employ visioning strategies, conduct asset mapping and implement local workforce preparation plans within the context of local communities. The conference will provide a forum to highlight current workforce preparation research and to validate future workforce research questions. The first part of the conference will provide participants with the theoretical underpinnings of the three areas of the workforce initiative—school to work, welfare to work, and work to work. The conference should identify gaps in workforce preparation and potential areas in need of research. The results of the conference will be disseminated to the extension system through reports to USDA and through the Workforce Preparation Listserv and web site (http://www.reeusda.gov/wfp/). The conference's effectiveness will be evaluated so that succeeding training events can be made more useful to participants.

Project Team Members: Dr. Gregory L. Crosby and Dr. Judy McKenna, Co-Chairs, Workforce Preparation Initiative Team, USDA; Dr. Natalie Ferry, Coordinator of Special Program Initiatives, Penn State Cooperative Extension Service; Margaret Johnson, Associate Administrator, South Carolina State Extension Service; Michael Smith, County Agent, University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service.

Keywords: community assets, education, workforce preparation

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Rapid globalization in everything from commerce to communications is changing the way we perceive the world. While the majority of the population is buying into the idea of a "global society," are local communities being left behind?

Ken Wilkinson, who was an internationally respected professor of rural sociology at Penn State, believed in community. Until his untimely death from cancer in 1993, Wilkinson practiced his beliefs of fostering community in all phases of his life. The Northeast Center honors Wilkinson's commitment to community development with the release of the book, *Community*.

Though *Community* is a biography, it crosses many lines into literature, sociology, and rural sociology. Enid Nelson's eighth-grade class, Medical Lake School District, Washington, downloaded *Community* for a social studies unit on society and community. Community development practitioners also will find this publication inspiring. *Community* is an educational and entertaining look at one man's dedication to the promotion of community. David Pacchioli, *Research Penn State*, said, "This really is a celebration. There's a heartfelt honesty, a warmth, that shines out of it that is very humanizing and inspiring. I end up wishing I had known Ken, and even feeling that in a way I do."

Community: A Biography in Honor of the Life and Work of Ken Wilkinson. ISBN: 1-883956-03-X, $11.95, 140 pp., is available in a soft-cover version from the Northeast Center, 814-863-4656. The web version is available free of charge from (http://www.cas.nercrd.psu.edu/community.html). All profits made from the sale of the biography will be donated to the student scholarship fund set up in Ken Wilkinson's honor.

Keywords: community development, World Wide Web

For more information about this project or to order *Community*, contact:

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Community: A Biography in Honor of the Life and Work of Ken Wilkinson

Highlights:

- *Community* honors Ken Wilkinson and his committment to community service.
- Published on-line (http://www.cas.nercrd.psu.edu/community.html).
- Available in soft-cover (140 pp.) for $11.95.

Community-Based Food Processing Strategies in the Northeast (Research)

Highlights:

- Case studies of community-based food processing incubators were completed because of the limited knowledge about their effectiveness as an economic development strategy.

- The book *Adding Value for Sustainability: A Guidebook for Cooperative Extension Agents and Other Agricultural Professionals*, is now available in softcover for $8.50 plus shipping by calling (814) 349-9856 or (607) 255-9832.

Interest in value-added food processing enterprises is growing in the Northeast, and in some areas, communities are responding to this interest by developing food processing incubators. Incubators provide facilities, equipment and technical services. They help enterprises in their start-up phase. Food processing incubators serve a variety of clientele such as farmers wishing to add value to raw agricultural products, and home-based businesses and cottage industries which can't afford to build their own commercial certified inspected kitchens. But information about the effectiveness of community-based food processing incubators as an economic development strategy is extremely limited.

Duncan Hilchey received a Northeast Center grant to conduct four in-depth case studies of community-based food processing incubators, and a basic financial analysis. An outcome of the project is an extension bulletin focusing on the plausibility of this development strategy for rural communities in the Northeast. A guidebook also was developed for cooperative extension agents and other agricultural development professionals. The guidebook provides background on small-scale processing enterprise development and can be used to educate interested producers, processors and communities.

To order the guidebook, *Adding Value for Sustainability: A Guidebook for Cooperative Extension Agents and other Agricultural Professionals*, by Kristen Markley and Duncan Hilchey, contact either PASA or the Farming Alternatives Program. Cost is $8.50 plus postage and handling.

Pennsylvania Association for
Sustainable Agriculture (PASA)
P.O. Box 419
Millheim, PA 16854
Phone: (814) 349-9856

Farming Alternatives Program
17 Warren Hall
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Collaborating organizations: Farming Alternatives Program, Cornell University; Northeast Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program; and Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture.

Keywords: community development, economic development, hazard analysis of critical points (HACCP), incubators, local food processors

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Sketch of proposed facade renovation to original architecture. From a Community Design Team visit to Weston, West Virginia.

Throughout the Northeast, many small towns are facing an uncertain future. The decline of industry has left many towns with few employment opportunities. The increasing presence of strip malls and large discount department stores also has put a severe crunch on small down town areas. Where there were once busy streets and crowded restaurants, there are now empty storefronts and empty sidewalks. These economic and physical changes are leading to a host of other social problems. Some small towns, however, are thriving.

What separates the successful communities from those that are in decline? Planning. Design. Vision. The Community Design Team, a West Virginia University extension program, helps communities to build awareness of planning and design issues that can help them achieve a better quality of life. Each team may include architects, economists, engineers, historians, landscape architects, sociologists, and other design or development experts who examine the community holistically, and parallel the many elements that create a community. A design team spends three days working with a community to develop a set of recommendations. These suggestions help the community to set some short- and long-term goals. These visions of the future, combined with the building of community support and involvement, greatly increase the town's chances for success.

Design teams have greatly helped the West Virginia communities of Grafton, Logan, Lost Creek, Pocahontas County and Weston. These communities have begun working on projects such as architectural restoration, historic landmark registration, rails-to-trails implementation ($55,000 grant), recreation trails and traffic flow changes.

Community Design Team Evaluation Survey (Extension/Research)

Highlights:

- Community Design Teams are helping five West Virginia communities to achieve a better quality of life by providing them with planning and design assistance.
- Surveys of design team and community members will help future design teams to be even more effective.

Scott Loveridge received a Northeast Center mini-grant to evaluate the Community Design Team program. This study will help to improve the quality of the design team process and program.

Design team members were supportive of the process. All design team volunteers, with the exception of one, indicated that they would participate on another design team. The responses of community members also were very positive. All respondents indicated that the design team had exceeded their expectations, that the visit was worth the costs and that they would recommend the program to other communities. A number of recommendations from design team and community members should help future design teams be even more effective.

More information about the Community Design Team can be found on West Virginia University Extension Service's Division of Community and Economic Development Web site (http://www.wvu.edu/~exten/depts/ced/ced.htm).

Keywords: community development, design, economic development

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Cultivating Hope: A Regional [state] Conference on Rural Poverty (Extension)

Highlights:

- A conference will be held in March 1999 to stimulate cooperative action for the working poor in Franklin County, MA.

Franklin [Massachusetts] Community Action Corporation is the recipient of a Northeast Center mini-grant. The mini-grant will be used to help fund a regional [state] conference on rural poverty. The purpose of the conference is to impact public policy and raise awareness about the unique nature and needs of rural areas, particularly the working poor in Franklin County. The main goal of the conference is to mobilize those who care about rural poverty around a common agenda by developing an action plan that ensures significant social impact. Human service professionals, legislators, and the community at large will be invited to attend the conference planned for March 11, 1999.

Nancy Folbre will be the keynote speaker. Folbre, a Montague resident and recent Mac Arthur fellow, is co-author of *The War on the Poor: A Defense Manual*. Legislators who are expected to attend and participate include Congressman John Olver, Senator Stan Rosenberg, Representative Stephen Kulik, Senator Stephen Brewer and legislators from the Rural Caucus. The conference will include interactive workshops covering topics such as coalition building, domestic violence, economic development, economic inequality, education, elders, homelessness, hunger, rural diversity, welfare reform and youth.

Collaborating Agencies: Community Health Center of Franklin County, Franklin Community Action Corporation, Franklin County Community Development Corporation, Greater Western Massachusetts Prevention Center, Legislative Small Town & Rural Caucus, Massachusetts Rural Development Council, North Quabbin Community Coalition, and Western Massachusetts Legal Services. This is a continuation of the Massachusetts' Pathways from Poverty team effort.

Keywords: public policy, rural poverty, working poor

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Distance Learning in Extension Programming (Extension)

Is distance learning the educational tool of the future? This project focuses on the changing definition of learning, society's expectations about what students need to learn, and delivery mechanisms or technology available to serve those needs. Extension has traditionally been involved in grassroots teaching where students or clientele are located. However, distance learning has become part of the educational landscape throughout the Northeast region. High schools and colleges are incorporating distance learning in various forms to broaden the base of educational opportunities. Extension needs to be an active player in this arena.

As extension educators it is our responsibility to provide our students with a rich inventory of educational resources and opportunities in order to prepare them for a rapidly changing future. Distance learning is the future. Enabled by the power of information technology, learning extends to distant sites. This profound shift away from the concept of learning in one place—where the teacher is located—requires that we learn to use new technology, new tools, and create learning situations and curricula in different ways. Information technology is playing a central role in the changes, driving the information explosion, and making it possible for us to think about new ways of responding to new demands.

I undertook a study leave that included coursework, specialized multi-day learning situations, specialized conferences, consultations with faculty from other institutions, and hands-on computer work and experience with the Morris Interactive Television Cooperative Network. This provided the foundation for conducting

Highlights:

- Distance education is changing our definition of learning. This is forcing extension educators to explore the capabilities of distance learning.
- Fifty-four students in three high schools learned about character and ethical decision making from the interactive television course, *Roadmap to Success*.
- One hundred twenty students in nine schools took *Character Counts*, a more thorough course on character.

Highlights Continued. . .

• Six Keys to Success for Learner Centered Education:

1. Plan for Technology
2. Reliable Equipment
3. Instructional Design
4. Instructor Training
5. Mgmt./Admin. Support
6. Learner Support Services

learner centered educational programming. Six keys to success were evident throughout the field:

1. Plan for Technology -- Evaluating learning needs and objectives is essential before the appropriate distance learning technologies can be incorporated.

2. Reliable Equipment -- Consider performance, compatibility, operability and ability to upgrade equipment as technology evolves. Skilled technical support also is critical.

3. Instructional Design -- The design of distance learning materials is unique and must pay special attention to the needs of the distant learner. Issues include challenges of interaction with remote learners, effective visual support materials and evaluation procedures.

4. Instructor Training -- It is important to train instructors in the use of the equipment and to develop instructional strategies and capabilities for effective learning in this environment.

5. Management/Administrative Support -- The support of decisionmakers is needed to ensure strategies for program development and promotion, resource allocation, instructional development and coordination with other institutions.

6. Learner Support Services -- Support services are needed, such as promotion and registration, consulting with instructor, distribution of course materials, access to library type resources, feedback on assignments and on-site learning facilitators.

After I assessed the scope and variety of distance learning possibilities, it was clear that my study needed to focus on one or two methodologies or technologies. I chose interactive television (ITV) and to a lesser degree computer based training (CBT).

"I am the designated computer technology contact for Warren County, New Jersey, for the Children, Youth, and Families at Risk state strengthening grant."

— Ann Rhinesmith

In order to be better equipped to conduct computer based training, I needed to become more computer literate. This has included extensive review of the literature, studying the *Official Netscape Communicator Book*, reading, taking web based classes, and hands on "practice" on the computer. This practice has included creating web pages (still under construction), that will be used as one method of reaching families of young children with parenting education. My experiences have provided me with an adequate knowledge and comfort level in using the computer. In fact, I am the designated computer technology contact for Warren County, New Jersey, for the Children, Youth, and Families at Risk (CYFAR) state strengthening grant.

Another major component of my project was taking a graduate course entitled *Seminar in Interactive Distance Learning: Issues and Problems* from Adult and Continuing Education at Rutgers University. Topics addressed in the course included interactive television facilities and teaching resources, teaching within the interactive television system, interactive television teaching techniques, multi-media resources, Internet/computer lab instruction, computer graphics programs and applications, and television production and video editing. Project teams were required to design, develop and deliver a distance learning interactive television course lesson. The teaching/learning project was based on the interactive synchronous model and concentrated on group dynamics, instructional resources and interactive instructional

methodologies. This provided the foundation for conducting learner-centered educational programming with a focus on interactive television.

The overall goal of my study leave was to begin to design, integrate and implement distance learning experiences for extension clientele within the northwest region of New Jersey. I committed to providing some leadership for cooperative extension programming in the region and conducting an optional in-service training for Rutgers Cooperative Extension faculty and staff.

Working closely with the Morris Interactive Television Network, three other Rutgers Cooperative Extension faculty members, one volunteer and I planned and implemented distance learning classes. The groundwork began when Roberta Moseley and I presented a proposal to the Morris Interactive Television Network's Board of Governors to implement a school-to-work community education curriculum. The Morris County Interactive Television Network is a regional consortium of twenty-one schools in a tri-county section of New Jersey.

In response to a perceived need for schools to educate students about ethical leadership and decisionmaking, interactive television technology was used to develop character education skills for high school class leaders. Extension educators from two counties worked with the Director of the Morris Interactive Television Network. In 1997-98, a character education program was offered by Extension Educators (4-H and Family & Consumer Science) to tenth through twelfth grade students in network schools.

"In response to a perceived need for schools to educate students about ethical leadership and decisionmaking, interactive television technology was used to develop character education skills for high school class leaders."

— Ann Rhinesmith

This program combined extension programming with interactive classroom technology to provide a distance learning course. Two, fifty-minute sessions were taught to fifty-four students in three high schools in 1997. *Roadmap to Success* introduced the six pillars of character and an ethical decision making process. The schools were linked so students could talk to one another and present their views on the six pillars of character. Lively discussions centered on case studies presented by student groups. Due to the success of this pilot and high evaluations by students and teachers at the three school sites, we developed a longer program.

This grew in the next semester to four, fifty-minute sessions involving nine schools and 120 students. The demand was higher than anticipated and provided a waiting list of clients. *Character Counts . . . in the ITV room, . . . in the school, . . . in the community, . . . in life* series was developed. The topic of character/ethics was repeated because workplace skill development is an important part of the New Jersey Core Curriculum for public schools. It also is a topic around which 4-H and Family & Consumer Sciences can collaborate.

"The topic of character ethics was repeated because workplace skill development is an important part of the New Jersey Core Curriculum for public schools."

— Ann Rhinesmith

We taught remote sites with a facilitator helping with classroom logistics and management. We piloted instructional skills programs for distance learning in an interactive classroom format using new technologies to enhance teaching and provide outreach to new audiences. These techniques and the development of material and presentation methods are being evaluated to enhance cooperative extension's outreach through distance learning.

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A workshop entitled *Reach Out and Touch Someone Through ITV* will be conducted at the 1998 National Meeting of Epsilon Sigma Phi. This workshop is

designed to show extension educators how to more effectively communicate the value and impact of the system's programs to clients and new audiences by providing resources for using interactive television technology with existing extension programs. Part of this workshop will focus on sharing some of the successes, the frustrations, and lessons learned from teaching over the interactive television system.

Currently, I am working with other extension faculty and staff to develop a proposal for an adult education series to link students in the three counties for interactive learning. We plan to refine and repeat the character education series for high school students.

Keywords: distance learning, interactive television, learner-centered education

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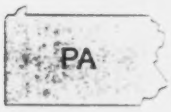
Environmental School Enrichment (Extension)



Highlights:

- Teacher/leader kits on environmental stewardship were provided to three elementary school teachers in Centre County.
- All teachers requested use of the kits for the next school year.

How are 4-H programs helping schools promote awareness of finite natural resources, environmental stewardship and conservation? This project expanded and improved the quality of the existing 4-H programs, *At Your Disposal*, *Adopt a Tree*, and *Endangered Species* through the development of teacher/leader kits. Northeast Center funds provided the curriculum materials necessary for three elementary school teachers to run a pilot program this past spring in the Port Matilda Elementary School, Centre County, Pennsylvania. The teacher/leader kits contributed to active learning experiences for sixty-three students.

Each kit contains 4-H materials, curriculum guides for teachers, children's literature, experimental equipment, software, environmental videotapes, posters and display items. These educational resources were chosen to help teachers develop and expand environmental concepts that promote awareness of finite natural resources, and the need for conservation and stewardship of the environment.

Due to the success of this pilot study, the 4-H environmental teacher/leader kits will continue to be part of the school enrichment program offered to Centre County elementary schools. All of the teachers involved requested use of the kits for the 1998-99 school year. A brochure detailing information about the environmental kits also was developed and will be available to promote the school enrichment program this school year.

The success of the project was measured using an evaluation form. This form asked questions related to use of materials found in the kits and how beneficial they were for the children. Results from the pilot will be used to assess the usefulness of the materials and improve upon the quality of the programs.

Many thanks for helping bring to fruition the teacher/leader kits and making them part of a school enrichment program I am very proud to offer our schools.

"Many thanks for helping bring to fruition the teacher/leader kits and making them part of a school enrichment program I am very proud to offer our schools."

— Patricia Wells

Teacher Evaluation Results

Which materials in the kits were most useful to you?

- Video tapes
- Curriculum guides
- Supplementary learning materials
- Project books
- Children's literature

How did using the Kits fit into your curriculum?

- Books were read to reinforce concepts taught.
- Curriculum guides were used as a reference tool and helped with planning lessons.
- Experimental materials were wonderful to have on hand.
- Pictures were enlarged to create a chart and develop vocabulary.
- Kit was used in conjunction with a science unit on trees, it was useful as a supplement.

How do you feel your students benefited as a result of using the materials provided in the Teacher/Leader Kit?

- The students gained a better understanding of the concepts I am teaching.
- The materials were great, they brought the unit into the classroom.

What would you like to see in the Teacher/Leader Kit that would improve the quality of this project?

- It's good!
- More video's
- I think the kit is pretty complete as is
- Now that I know what is in the kit -I will want it next year in my plans for this unit

"Now that I know what is in the [teacher/leader] kit—I will want to use it next year in my plans for this unit."

— Teacher evaluation reponse

Would you be interested in using a Teacher/Leader Kit next year?

4 yes
0 no

Keywords: education, environment, school enrichment

For more information about this project, contact:

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Evalutation of New Growth Theory/New Institutional Economics Workshop for Rural Researchers (Research)

NATIONAL

Highlights:

- A workshop on *New Growth Theory* and *New Institutional Economics* was held in September 1996 to help researchers in rural economics with envisioning application to their work.
- An evaluation of the workshop indicates that it had a considerable impact on the teaching, extension programs, and research direction of the participants.
- The Economic Research Service has undertaken work in clustering and wage impacts.

NEW ECONOMICS

How are agricultural economists applying new theories to their work? The regional rural development centers co-sponsored a national workshop for agricultural economists on the *New Growth Theory* and *New Institutional Economics*. Noted economists Paul Krugman of Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Gary Libecap of the University of Arizona led the workshop. The workshop was held in Kansas City, Missouri, on September 23-24 1996. The purpose of the workshop was to make recent advances in economics available to those concerned with research on the economics of rural America. Most of the participants already knew about *New Growth Theory* and *New Institutional Economics*, however, the workshop permitted them to learn more and to envision application to their own work.

In highly simplified terms, new growth theory encompases several independent efforts that challenge traditional growth theory. Traditional growth theory is based upon assumptions of competitive economies with many small firms. This approach depends heavily on the principle of comparative advantage to enable regions to equalize incomes through trade. One inconsistency with this theory is that income differentials have persisted over long periods of time between regions and countries.

New Growth Theory generally follows the belief that the real costs of many goods decline over time rather than being relatively constant as assumed in traditional theory. As a result, an economy may be composed of many very large firms producing similiar but not identical products. Further, similar units may trade, and as a result income differentials may not be eliminated automatically through trade. The traditional theory depends heavily on the notion that economies seek and will eventually attain internal and external equilibrium conditions. *New Growth Theory* does not deny that there is a tendency for economies to move toward an equilibrium, but it questions whether the tendency is sufficiently strong to bring about the ideal conditions envisioned in long term equilibrium in traditional theory.

There has been a long tradition of institutional economics in the United States. In highly simplified terms this means that the formal rules, customs, and habits that

affect economic activity should be studied just as economic activity itself is studied. For example, economists should not only be able to explain price formation, but they should also understand how a market is formed and how the structure of the market affects the performance of the market. The new institutional economists accept this, but they say that institutions should be viewed as economic goods also. That is, there is a demand and a supply of institutions, and institutions should be analyzed in a market framework. If institutions are viewed in this way, market criteria can be used to judge their effectiveness. Following this approach, the extent to which institutions stand in the way of or enhance economic progress can be specified.

Most of the workshop's forty-five participants were agricultural economists, although all had some grounding in economics. They are involved in research and extension work at twenty-six universities and two major rural research organizations: the Economic Research Service of the USDA and the Rural Policy Research Institute. Participants were uniformly enthusiastic about the workshop, and several ideas surfaced about organizing follow up activities to further enrich economics research on rural America.

Emery Castle and Bruce Weber of Oregon State University organized the workshop, with assistance from Glenn Nelson of the Rural Policy Research Institute and David Kraybill of Ohio State University. Sponsors of the workshop include the four regional rural development centers, the National Rural Studies Committee, Economic Research Service/USDA, the Farm Foundation, Rural Policy Research Institute, and the American Agricultural Economics Association Foundation. The workshop was a relatively low cost operation. The total cash costs were less than $25,000, including twenty-one travel grants of $500 each. The workshop was an intense activity extending over a two and one-half day period.

Evaluation Summary

Evaluation forms were sent to all the participants one year after the workshop. Twenty-five of the forty-five participants responded. Respondents indicated that the workshop had an important influence on their teaching, research and extension work.

Influence on Teaching, Research and Extension

The workshop had the greatest impact on teaching. Two-thirds of teaching respondents said that it had a great or significant impact. Several reported that they had reorganized their courses as a result of the workshop. Most included material on both *New Growth Theory* and *New Institutional Economics* in their reorganizations.

Half of the extension respondents said that the workshop had a significant impact on their programs. Some extension educators in community development placed more emphasis on industrial clustering at the local level in response to *New Growth Theory*. Others emphasized institutional boundary issues and property rights.

Sixty percent of the research respondents said the workshop had a great or significant impact on their research. Several reported they were writing papers incorporating *New Growth Theory/New Institutional Economics* concepts and

Highlights Continued . . .

- A paper on water transfers was presented at the 1998 Western Regional Science Association meetings.
- The American Agricultural Economics Association will sponsor a New Growth Theory workshop at their 1999 meeting.

"Two-thirds of teaching respondents said that it had a great or significant impact [on their teaching]."

— Emery Castle

references. Several indicated that the workshop stimulated new research in spatial economics. Others initiated work in government decisionmaking and water allocation drawing on *New Institutional Economics*.

"Ninety-two percent [of respondents] reported that the workshop helped them to become better economists, and all participants believed that the workshop was a good use of their time."

— Emery Castle

Almost all (96%) of the respondents said that the workshop stimulated them to read and learn more about incorporating *New Growth Theory/New Institutional Economics* in the intervening year. Ninety-two percent reported that the workshop helped them to become better economists, and all participants believed that the workshop was a good use of their time.

Follow up activities

Several participants organized a symposium on the implications of *New Growth Theory* for rural areas at the 1997 Southern Regional Science Association meetings in Memphis, Tennessee. Many of the participants from the original workshop attended this symposium, indicating their continued interest in *New Growth Theory*.

Subsequent to the evaluation, several other research activities have been stimulated by the *New Growth Theory* and *New Institutional Economics* workshop. The Economic Research Service has undertaken work in clustering and wage impacts, indicating that this work was improved by, if not stimulated by the workshop. A paper on water transfers, presented at the 1998 Western Regional Science Association meetings in Monterey, CA, was directly stimulated by Gary Libecap's presentation at the workshop.

"Topics most often suggested for any future workshops were: devolution, spatial economics, new growth theory and international trade and marketing."

— Emery Castle

All respondents indicated that the workshop was a good use of time and that they would probably participate in future seminars on frontier topics. Topics most often suggested for any future workshops were: devolution, spatial economics, new growth theory and international trade and marketing. More than half of the respondents indicated that involving other disciplines would make a future workshop more attractive. There was greatest support for holding future workshops as independent events. Almost 80% supported this idea. Two-thirds said they would favor holding a workshop in conjunction with the American Agricultural Economics Association or regional science meetings.

The workshop continues to generate follow up activities. The American Agricultural Economics Association has accepted a proposal to sponsor a workshop on *New Growth Theory* at its 1999 annual meeting. The organization of this workshop is a direct outgrowth of the Kansas City New Growth Theory and New Institutional Economics workshop.

Keywords: new growth theory, new institutional economics, rural economics

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Factors Influencing Local Decisionmakers' Choice of Economic Development Policies (Research)

Highlights:

- A survey of citizens and policymakers seeks to understand the reasons why the economic development strategy of industrial recruitment is often used instead of a local business retention and expansion program.
- Results of the citizen survey have been printed in *TVA Rural Studies*, *Economic Development Digest*, and presented at the Western Regional Science Association meeting.

BR&E

Industrial recruitment is one of the most popular methods of economic development in the northeast. Many feel, however, that it is too costly and maybe even counterproductive. What alternatives are there to industrial recruitment strategies such as financing industrial parks or giving tax incentives for industry? One alternative is Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E). BR&E programs seek to catalyze local economic development efforts by creating a team of local leaders to help the community improve its business climate. These local leaders work with residents to interview local businesses. The results of the interviews help to find ways of encouraging the survival and growth of existing businesses.

Northeast Center funds are helping Scott Loveridge and Tom Ilvento to research the reasons why local decisionmakers readily implement industrial recruitment strategies but not BR&E. The study involves two related telephone survey activities. The first survey asked West Virginia citizens about their attitudes towards various economic development policies. The second survey was mutli-state and targeted policymakers who have implemented local business retention and expansion programs. This survey is close to completion. The tabulation of results should be completed in the next couple of months.

The survey of West Virginia citizens is complete. A paper based on the results, "West Virginia Attitudes Towards Economic Development" by Scott Loveridge and Beth Loy, was presented at the Western Regional Science Association meetings in February 1998. The study also received partial support from the Tennessee Valley Authority. A working paper on citizen attitudes towards economic development was published by *TVA Rural Studies*. The study results also were summarized in *Economic Development Digest*, a newsletter of the National Association of Development Organizations. The newsletter has a circulation of over 9000, and is available on the Internet (http://www.nado.org/digest.htm).

Keywords: business retention and expansion, economic development, industrial recruitment

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BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Great Beginnings: "Just in Time" Deliveries for Parents (Extension)

WWW

Highlights:

- In response to a great need for educating parents, "Great Beginnings" newsletter series for parents of infants and young children was adapted for Web access (http://bluehen.ags.udel.edu/deces/gb/).

The first years of life are critical for children and their parents. Recent research suggests that the brain pathways formed in the first three years of a child's life (primarily through interactions with parents) are more crucial to a lifetime of successful learning than had been previously understood.

"Great Beginnings," a monthly educational newsletter series for parents of infants and young children, capitalizes on the "teachable moment" by providing age-specific child developmental information. "Great Beginnings" gives tips on the most effective ways to provide love and attention; ideas about ways to promote verbal, intellectual and emotional development; and suggestions for ways to respond to a child's emotional and developmental needs. The series helps parents identify any emerging problems and offers suggestions on how to find appropriate help. In addition, it helps to cut through the isolation that can be associated with parenting young children. The series provides information about specific parenting skills and resources, and emphasizes positive and constructive child-rearing practices.

Patricia Tanner Nelson received a Northeast Center mini-grant to expand the audience of the "Great Beginnings" newsletter beyond the state of Delaware and the current families she serves by making it accessible through the World Wide Web. Issues that have been adapted to the web cover newborn through sixteen months. By making this educational series accessible through the World Wide Web, Tanner Nelson anticipates that production and mailing costs should be significantly reduced and access enhanced. "Great Beginnings" can be viewed at the following url address: (http://bluehen.ags.udel.edu/deces/gb/). The Web site is maintained by Cooperative Extension Education in Agriculture and Home Economics, University of Delaware.

Keywords: child development, newsletters, parent education, World Wide Web

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Ground Water Festival Enhancement for "Meet the Plant" and Future "Splash$_2$O" 4-H Workshops (Extension)

PA

Highlights:

- The threat to our groundwater supplies has led extension personnel to educate youth about protecting and conserving our water resources.
- 1418 sixth-graders attended the Washington County Groundwater Festival.
- More than ten agencies collaborated on the project including the Audobon Society, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Washington County Groundwater Coalition and the Washington County Schools.

Groundwater is a vital resource for many communities, whether it is used for household water, industrial and commercial uses or agriculture. Yet groundwater supplies are increasingly threatened by contamination from various sources. Once groundwater contamination occurs, restoring its original quality can be difficult and costly. Educators, municipal officials (land use regulators) and citizens are working together to protect and conserve groundwater through educational programming and the formation of groundwater coalitions.

For the past three years, Pamela Paletta has been participating in an annual groundwater festival for sixth-graders in the Washington County (PA) School District. This year the Washington County Groundwater Festival was held May 7, 1998, at California University of Pennsylvania. A total of 1,418 students attended.

The goals of the annual groundwater festival are to increase attendees' knowledge and understanding of groundwater issues, encourage students and teachers to adopt behaviors that protect and conserve groundwater resources and to establish a link between municipal officials and students. The 1998 festival focused on ways groundwater is intricately interconnected with people and other natural resources. Presenters at the workshop covered aquifer systems, conservation, groundwater contamination, groundwater fluid, groundwater laws and public policy, groundwater use, groundwater use in other countries, surface water and wetlands. All workshops were "hands-on" activities. Prior to the festival, the participating schools were asked to undertake projects in their communities. Displays explaining these community-school projects were set up in the exhibition hall and were available for viewing during the festival.

Paletta received a Northeast Center mini-grant to enhance her contribution to the festival: the "Meet the Plants" workshop and "The Price is Water Game." This enabled students who attended to receive a copy of the 4-H project books "Meet the Plants" and "Splash$_2$O," and to receive information from the booklet "Impact of Disposing of Household Cleaning Products in Wastewater Treatment Systems." Workshop activities and handouts increased participants' knowledge of water conservation and water as it relates to plant life. Eighty students participated in this workshop. For the "The Price is Water Game," students were placed on teams and were given questions related to water usage in the home and conservation of water at home.

The impact of the festival is important as we continue to educate young children about understanding groundwater issues, encourage students to adopt behaviors that protect and conserve groundwater resources, and establish links between municipal officials, communities and students.

Collaborating agencies: 4-H volunteers, Audubon Society, California University (site of festival), Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Department of Environmental Protection, Extension Homemaker volunteers, League of Women Voters, Washington County Groundwater coalition volunteers, Washington County

Parks and Recreation, Washington County School District, and volunteers from many other agencies for speakers, exhibits, and other duties involved in the festival.

Keywords: groundwater education, youth

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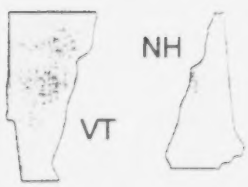
Identifying Factors Leading to Effective Local Conservation Commissions (Research)



Highlights:

- Study gathered and analyzed data from conservation commissions in New Hampshire and Vermont to help them become more effective at protecting natural and social landscapes in their communities.
- Report of findings distributed to over seventy organizations in northern New England.
- Summary of successful conservation strategies distributed to the participating conservation commissions and to commissions in six other states.

Complex forces that act upon and within rural communities in the Northeast Region create changes in the natural and social landscape. Now, in an increasingly global context—coinciding with cutbacks in federal and state programs—the environmental challenge lies at the community level. Rural residents and local conservation commissions are faced with a myriad of issues brought on by these complex forces. Some issues are land-use in nature and include degradation of wetlands, aquatic and upland habitats; farmland loss; land consumption and fragmentation due to growth and sprawl; and water pollution. Local conservation commissions have the potential to effectively negotiate citizen involvement, set public policy and direct conservation action, yet they are often staffed by community volunteers and frequently operate with limited funds. Responses that conservation commissions make to these issues include land conservation, management of town conservation lands, public education and review of wetland permit applications. Other issues include involvement of rural residents in local decisionmaking and the relation between the health of local economies, environments and quality of life.

Christine Negra, Lois Frey and Virginia Rausch collaborated on a study of local conservation commissions in New Hampshire and Vermont. There are currently 206 conservation commissions in New Hampshire (of 234 municipalities) and 74 conservation commissions in Vermont (of 246 municipalities). The goal was to identify strategies to help conservation commissions become more effective. The project was an applied research study that involved the gathering and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data. The study used triangulation (i.e. use of a variety of data sources, data-gathering methods, and interpretative perspectives) in order to be comprehensive and accurate. Commissioner interviews, a mail survey,

and review of newsletters and annual reports were the primary data-sources. Data gathered through interviews can effectively convey the experience and perspective of the individual conservation commissioner, but may be subject to lapses in memory or interviewer bias. Whenever possible, all commissioners were interviewed. The response rate for the mail survey component was 62%. At the end of the questionnaire, respondents were offered the opportunity to request the survey results, and over 70% of the 154 commissions did.

The report of the study findings and recommendations for training and support needed by conservation commissioners was sent to over 70 different organizations in northern New England; these organizations include New Hampshire Municipal Association, New Hampshire and Vermont Regional Planning Commissions, northeastern extension faculty in natural resources and community development, state conservation commission associations, state natural resource and community development agencies.

A summary of successful conservation strategies and recommendations for action were distributed to conservation commissions in New Hampshire and Vermont. In addition, a presentation on "Top Ten Tips for Effective Commissions" was provided at the Vermont Association of Conservation Commissions Annual Meeting. Study findings were used to develop the presentation and handouts. Study findings also were shared with state conservation commission associations in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island and Vermont.

The final report of gathered information and the interpretation of appropriate recommendations for conservation commissions and helping agencies provides an important new tool that should improve local conservation efforts. The project was successful in identifying a wide variety of effective strategies used by some conservation commissions that others do not use. In numerous instances, examples of strategies used in one state were used to develop recommendations for commissions in the other state. We feel that the multi-state research approach was beneficial both in terms of gathering more useful information and in bringing together individuals from the two states to share ideas and plan future collaboration (i.e. through multi-state meetings and project advisory board).

An additional benefit of this research project is the inclusion of the study findings into the Conservation Commissioner Handbook being produced by the New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions. University of Vermont Extension received a grant award of $8,600 from the USDA Water Quality Grants program to support research, writing, and publication of four factsheets directed toward key water quality-related topics of interest to conservation commissions.

Four hundred copies of each factsheet will be produced and distributed. These factsheets will be put on-line through the Vermont Center for Rural Studies Web site. All factsheets will include: (1) a case study description of a conservation commission that successfully used the specific strategy with emphasis on important lessons learned and pitfalls to avoid; (2) a comprehensive list of resource organizations, materials, individuals, and funding sources; and (3) simple guidelines on how to effectively integrate the strategy into existing commission activities and community situations.

Highlights Continued . . .

• University of Vermont Extension received a grant of $8,600 from USDA to support water quality factsheets of interest to conservation commissions.

Ten Recommendations for More Effective Conservation Commissions:

1. Have a clear mission and goals and understand what powers your commission possesses.

2. Attempt to work collaboratively with other town boards.

3. Avoid miscommunication and frustration . . . work together as a group.

4. Work hard to promote community awareness and the credibility of your commission.

5. Recognize barriers (time, money, apathy, opponents of projects) to your efforts and work to get around them.

6. Get help from outside of your community (statewide, regional, or national organizations).

7. Continue to recruit and integrate new conservation commissioners.

8. Identify, meet, and manage the financial resources you need to implement projects.

9. Seek training that is specific to your commission activities.

10. Effectively plan projects and keep working so that they will be completed.

Project Team: Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions: Virginia Rausch, Executive Director; University of Vermont Extension Service: Lois Frey, Regional Specialist, Community Resource Development; Christine Negra, Research Coordinator, Community Resource Development.

Other collaborating agencies: Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions; New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions; University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension; University of Vermont Extension; and three organizations that work with local groups in both states—the Connecticut River Joint Commision, the Northern Sustainable Communities Network and Upper Valley Land Trust.

Keywords: community involvement, conservation, local government, rural communities

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Implementing Local Business Retention and Expansion Visitation Programs

NATIONAL WWW

Highlights:

- Business Retention and Expansion materials help communities to improve the local business climate for existing and future businesses.

Communitites in thirty-one states around the country are discovering the benefits of Business Retention and Expansion. Extension (BR&E) agents, communities and others concerned about the economic health of their communities have bought BR&E materials. This set of materials is in its second print run and also has been translated into French and Polish, adapted for use in Canada, and sold to parties in Australia.

BR&E Visitation programs catalyze local economic development efforts by creating a team of local leaders to help the community improve its business climate. *Implementing Local Business Retention and Expansion Visitation Programs* is designed to help guide community leaders through the BR&E process. The materials were written by Scott Loveridge, extension associate professor at West Virginia University; and George Morse, professor and extension economist at University of Minnesota; and are based on years of research and experience in the field. Both authors are active members of Business, Retention and Expansion International (http://www.brei.org/).

The BR&E package includes a notebook, marketing brochures, five training booklets (complete with CD-ROM for easy duplication), and a video. The materials sell for $40.00 one to nine packages, $38.00 ten to twenty-four packages, $36.00 twenty-five or more packages. These prices do not include shipping and handling charges. The training booklets ONLY also are available for $6.00 (plus shipping).

Keywords: business retention and expansion, economic development

States with at least one BR&E sale

States with at least one BR&E sale are indicated by dark grey.

For more information about BR&E or to order this publication, contact:

The Northeast Regional Center
for Rural Development
7 Armsby Building
The Pennsylvania State University
University Park, PA 16802-5602
Phone: (814) 863-4656,
ask for Traci Shimmel or Eileen Zuber.

- These materials have been sold to parties in thirty-one states, translated into French and Polish and adapted for use in Canada.

- Brochure and booklets available for preview (http://www.cas.nercrd.psu.edu/publications.html).

Improving Effectiveness of Local Conservation Commissions (Extension)

Frank Mitchell received a mini-grant to integrate research and extension outreach education by disseminating results of a recently-completed Northeast Center study, *Identifying Factors Leading to Effective Local Conservation Commissions* during an educational meeting. One of the study's goals is to develop guidelines for extension efforts to provide needed skills and concepts to conservation commissioners and to facilitate creation of new conservation commissions. The study looked at what has helped some commissions and commissioners set and achieve their local conservation goals and what has hindered others from doing this. These projects increased communication and collaboration among extension staff and local conservation commissions in Vermont and New Hampshire and developed evaluative criteria and methods to measure extension's impact in working with conservation commissions and included extension staff from different disciplines.

Twenty-six people attended the meeting, including a few from other organizations with interest in partnerships with extension. During the meeting, staff profiles were collected and compiled. This information is being used to identify and coordinate staff activities in areas related to the project and to provide an idea of the internal staff resources available for work related to this effort.

In New Hampshire, one result of the meeting is an increased effort to apply the results of the research to land conservation commissions. Six staff and one program leader have developed plans for presentations at the annual meeting of New

Highlights:

- Vermont and New Hampshire extension staff met to coordinate activities in promotion and development of local conservation commissions.

Highlights Continued . . .

- New Hampshire extension will make a presentation at the annual meeting of the New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions, and offer support through a grant program.

Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions and to offer assistance to communities through a "request for proposal" process.

Team Members: University of New Hampshire: Phil Auger, Extension Educator, Forest Resources; Frank Mitchell, Extension Specialist, Water Resources; University of Vermont, Community Resource Development: Lois Frey, Regional Specialist; Christine Negra, Research Coordinator; and Bob Townsend, Extension Specialist.

Keywords: community involvement, conservation, local government, rural communities

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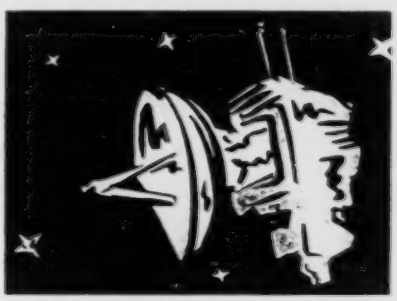
Linking National Adult Family Care Organization Conference Issues to Caregivers via Satellite Technology (Extension)

NATIONAL

Highlights:

- This project extended the National Adult Family Care Organization Conference to rural caregivers via satellite technology.



National Adult Family Care Organization

Long term care continues to increase as population aging increases the demand for services. The long term care system includes a variety of services, some of which are understood and used more effectively than others. Adult foster care is one of the more innovative services that is not well understood. Several years ago, the Northeast Center funded a project to study the feasibility of adult foster care as a means of income generation for rural areas. As a result of that project, a National Adult Family Care Organization was formed, and for the past three years, this organization has been holding annual conferences to educate extension faculty, caregivers and agency personnel about foster care challenges and opportunities.

Anne FitzGerald received a Northeast Center mini-grant to extend the October 23-24, 1998, National Adult Family Care Organization conference to rural caregivers via satellite technology. The 1998 conference focused on the following: (1) ways to identify local adult family care issues; (2) ways to use satellite technology and or video downlink to outreach sites providing adult family care as an economic alternative to long term health care; (3) ways to communicate research-on adult family care issues to caregivers, agency personnel, and extension faculty in participating rural communities; (4) ways to identify the cooperative extension system as a resource in addressing family and community issues to help shape and or influence the adoption of adult family care as a viable economic alternative for rural communities; and (5) ways to share the conference findings with participating extension faculty, caregivers and community partners in the Northeast.

Project Members: Elsie Fetterman, President, National Adult Family Care Organization; Annette T. FitzGerald, Senior Extension Educator, University of Connecticut; Connie McKenna, Secretary, National Adult Family Care Organization.

Keywords: adult foster care

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MONEY 2000 ⊕

The ability to manage resources is crucial to the well being of all individuals and families. In today's world of instant credit, efficient management skills, especially those related to money, can be a big factor in a family's ability to move out of poverty. This project is a midterm assessment of the MONEY 2000 program that has been operating successfully in New Jersey and New York for several years. The goal of the program is to help participants either reduce debt or increase savings by $2,000 by the year 2000. Barbara O'Neill, Patricia Brennan, Barbara Bristow and Jing Xiao received a Northeast Center mini-grant to develop a survey instrument to assess the perceptions of the more than 3,000 New Jersey and New York program participants and their coordinators learning needs and progress in the program. The analysis will focus on participants' behavioral changes and be used to suggest ways extension educators could improve the program. Results will be disseminated to state project leaders through the national MONEY 2000 Listserv and via conferences and publications.

Rutgers Cooperative Extension and Cornell Cooperative Extension have developed a strong and ongoing collaborative relationship as a result of several previously-funded projects and national leadership roles with MONEY 2000. The promotional video, *MONEY 2000: Start Today* that was funded by the Northeast Center in collaboration with Rutgers Cooperative Extension and Cornell Cooperative Extension, continues to be used to promote enrollment in and awareness of this cost-effective program.

In January MONEY 2000 will be distributed widely, both locally and nationally. USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service is a member of the Facts on Saving and Investing Campaign, a national coalition of government agencies, consumer organizations, and business groups dedicated to helping Americans save and invest wisely. Since it was launched in 1996, MONEY 2000 has helped over 7,000 people in more than 30 states increase their net worth by more than $3 million. The initiative is coordinated nationally by USDA's

MONEY 2000 Evaluative Research Project: A Mid-term Assessment (Research)

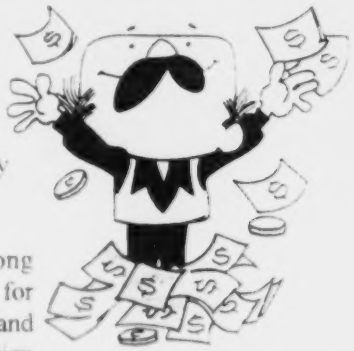
WWW

Highlights:

- Since 1996 MONEY 2000 has helped over 7000 people to increase their net worth by more than $3 million
- This evaluation will focus on participant's behavioral changes and be used to suggest ways that extension educators can improve the program
- Visit MONEY 2000 (http://www.Money2000.org/)

Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service and its affiliated cooperative extension offices in every state.

MONEY 2000 was created to help families who are living paycheck-to-paycheck and struggling with low savings or high household debt. "It's like a weight management program for your money," said Dr. Barbara O'Neill, co-director of the original MONEY 2000 program at Rutgers Cooperative Extension. "Participants set personal financial goals and periodically 'weigh-in' with local project directors who help them stay on track."



"MONEY 2000 enrollment costs very among states, but are always less than $20, which pays for quarterly newsletters, computerized debt analyses and educational seminars."

— Barbara O'Neill

MONEY 2000 enrollment costs vary among states, but are always less than $20, which pays for quarterly newsletters, computerized debt analyses and educational seminars. For more information or to sign up for MONEY 2000, visit the website at the following url: www.Money2000.org or check the "county government" section of your telephone book for your local cooperative extension office.

Project Members: Cornell University: Barbara Bristow; University of Rhode Island: Claudia Kerbel and Dr. Jing Xiao; Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey: Patricia Brennan and Barbara O'Neill.

Keywords: debt reduction, financial behavior change, financial well being, MONEY 2000, savings

For more information about this project, contact:

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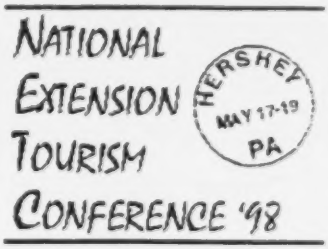
National Extension Tourism Conference

NATIONAL WWW



Tourism is booming in the Northeast. Tourism is Pennsylvania's second leading industry, and it contributes over 4 billion dollars to West Virginia's economy annually. Little wonder then why many extension specialists are supporting tourism development as a sustainable economic development tool. The Northeast Center played a crucial role in planning and sponsoring this year's National Extension Tourism Conference. The conference was held May 17-20, 1998, in Grantville, Pennsylvania. The goal of the conference was to bring together people interested in tourism, travel, and outdoor recreation development, marketing and policy.

Dr. Lalia Rach* delivered a lively and insightful keynote presentation. She emphasized the need for a national dialogue on the role of tourism in the U.S. economy in order to compete internationally. Travelers today are more discriminating than ever. Their expectations for a quality experience are very high. Rach sees a real need for developing sophisticated niche markets, packages for "single adventurer travelers, single senior travelers, grandparent/grandchild weekends . . ." Rach said, "Destinations that don't recognize that Americans have changed will fail."

One hundred thirty-seven participants from twenty-nine states, the District of Columbia, and Canada attended the conference. A variety of sessions covered agritourism case studies; association building; business retention and expansion programs; cultural and heritage tourism opportunities; culture and commerce partnering; customer service training; festival volunteer and manager training; information resource needs for rural tourism development; policy and tax issues; program evaluation; travel and tourism policy needs; and visitor attraction creation. In addition, participants in a post-conference workshop discussed the assessment of tourism economic impacts at the community level.

The conference proceedings can be found on the Northeast Center Web site (http://www.cas.nercrd.psu.edu/publications.html). An on-line resource list, The National Tourism Education Clearinghouse (http://www.cas.nercrd.psu.edu/tourism.html), was created after the conference.

NATIONAL TOURISM EDUCATION
clearinghouse

* Dr. Rach is Dean of the Center for Hospitality, Tourism and Travel administration, New York University

Planning Committee: Norman Bender, Chair, University of Connecticut; Daryl Heasley, Northeast Center; Ernie Hughes, Southern University; Glenn Kreag, Tourism Center & Minnesota Sea Grant; Diane Kuehn, New York Sea Grant; Patty Kunes, Office of Ag. Conferences/Short Courses; Patricia Leach, Indiana County, PA, Cooperative Extension; Julie Leones, University of Arizona; James Maetzold, USDA, NRCS; Gary Peterson, Office of Ag. Conference/Short Courses; David Sharpe, Montana State University; Bonnie Teater, Southern Rural Development Center; Bob Townsend, University of Vermont Extension System; Mike Woods, Oklahoma State University; Allan Worms, University of Kentucky.

Keywords: economic development, recreation, tourism

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Highlights:

- Conference attended by one hundred thirty-seven participants from twenty-nine states, the District of Columbia, and Canada.
- Conference proceedings on-line (http://www.cas.nercrd.psu.edu/publications.html).
- Led to creation of the National Tourism Education Clearinghouse (http://www.cas.nercrd.psu.edu/tourism.html)

Natural Resources Income Opportunities for Private Lands Conference (Extension)

Highlights:

- This regional conference brought together private landowners and natural resource professionals to discuss the use of private lands for income generation.

The Northeast Center was one of the sponsors of the *Natural Resources Income Opportunities for Private Lands Conference*. This regional conference was held in Hagerstown, Maryland, April 5-7, 1998. Jonathan Kays served as the conference chair.

The conference brought together natural resources professionals and private landowners to discuss trends, challenges and opportunities in using natural resources as a means for generating income and sustaining rural communities. Topics covered included issues related to legal investment considerations, natural resources enterprises related to forest farming and forest use, and recreational access. Tourism/ marketing information and ideas also were shared.

The conference was particularly valuable for the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions, which have experienced rapid changes in land use, characterized by the fragmentation of farm and forest properties and increasing numbers of small farmers and forest owners. The conference committee has been discussing follow up options. Ideas being suggested include developing extension bulletins on specific enterprise opportunities where there is a lack of printed information. Some committee members also are planning multi-state programs.

Conference Planning Committee: Bill Aiken, West Virginia Farm Bureau; Charles Barden, Northeast Regional Extension Forester; John Becker, The Agricultural Law Research and Education Center, The Dickinson School of Law; Margaret Brittingham Brant, School of Forest Resources, The Pennsylvania State University; John Butler, Maryland Farm Bureau; W. Mark Ford, Westvaco Corporation; Tom Ford, Penn State Cooperative Extension; Gary Goff, Cornell Cooperative Extension; Bill Grafton, West Virginia University Cooperative Extension Service; Jonathan Kays, University of Maryland Cooperative Extension; Roger Locandro, Rutgers Cooperative Extension; Jim Miller, USDA—Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service; Philip Pannill, Maryland Department of Natural Resources; Jim Parkhurst, Virginia Cooperative Extension Service; Donald Schwartz, Maryland Cooperative Extension; Bob Simpson, American Tree Farm System; Peter Smallidge, Cornell Cooperative Extension; and Edward Smith, Ohio State University Extension.

Major conference sponsors included: Forest Service—Northeastern Area, State and Private Forestry; Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development; United States Department of Agriculture; University of Maryland Cooperative Extension Service; USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service; USDA Rural Development; and West Virginia Farm Bureau.

Keywords: land use, natural resources, private lands

For more information about this conference or to order the proceedings, contact:

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NETWORK99

Network Newsletter

Network 99, the Northeast Center's quarterly newsletter, is available electronically through the Northeast Center's website (http://www.cas.nercrd.psu.edu/network.html). A *Network* preview sheet (hardcopy) is mailed to subscribers each quarter when a new issue is released electronically. The preview sheet briefly highlights articles appearing in the current electronic issue. Contact the Northeast Center if you would like to be added to the *Network* preview sheet mailing list. Print copies of individual articles appearing in *Network* or the entire newsletter itself are available upon request. Phone: (814) 863-4656.

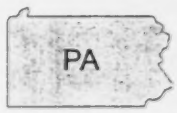
Keywords: newsletters, rural development

Northeast Center Web site

The Northeast Center Web site continues to grow. This year saw the major additions of *Community: A Biography in Honor of the Life and Work of Ken Wilkinson*, and the National Tourism Education Clearinghouse. A more dedicated effort to new content and frequent updates has greatly helped to increase traffic on our site. Information about the Northeast Center, publications, funding programs, projects, as well as links to other Web sites and calendar items focused on rural development issues are all mainstays on the site: (http://www.cas.nercrd.psu.edu/).

Keywords: rural development, World Wide Web

Obtaining Care: Access to Health Care Services and the Use of Self-Care Practices among Poor Families in the Rural Northeast (Research)



Research has shown consistently that residents of rural areas, particularly the rural poor, face considerable barriers in accessing needed health care services. These barriers include the absence of or inadequate health insurance coverage, the consolidation of health care services in centralized areas, shortages of health care providers in sparsely populated areas, an increasing rate of hospital closures in rural areas, the need to travel (often considerable distances) over difficult roads to receive professional care, and the concurrent lack of public transportation services. It has been well documented that these and other barriers are magnified for the rural poor. What, then, do poor rural families, especially those with children, do when someone in the family is ill? Cathy Kassab and Deborah Preston, Penn State researchers, are turning to these families for answers.

Through a Northeast Center funded study, Kassab and Preston are interviewing in-depth the primary female caregiver (the mother) in poor rural families with children. These initial study sites include fifteen families in Cattaragus, New York, and fifteen families in Juniata and Mifflin County, Pennsylvania. These are economically distressed nonmetropolitan counties within the northern Appalachian mountain range of New York and Pennsylvania. Others will be included to enhance these interviews. Kassab and Preston are working with the local cooperative extension service in each area to identify families for the study. Three groups of families will be interviewed: (1) those with at least one family member enrolled in Medicaid, (2) those with at least one member enrolled in a private health insurance plan, and (3) those in which no member has either public or private health insurance.

Highlights:

- Research results should help service providers identify ways to better incorporate self-care practices of low income families into their delivery systems.

The study is designed to assess the influence of state context on access to care and to describe the problems and strategies associated with obtaining care for these three vulnerable types of families. Grounded theory is being used as the framework for collecting the sample and analyzing the qualitative data. The grounded theory method is a guide for generating an explanatory model from qualitative data. From this analysis, Kassab and Preston will produce a conceptual model of the process of obtaining care among poor rural northern Appalachian families. In addition, each participant will be administered a standardized survey about the family's health care practices (barriers to the use of health care services, demographic and employment information, the extent to which illness in the family has created financial problems, financial and other forms of hardship, satisfaction with health care services, preventive health behaviors, type and availability of health care coverage for each family member as well as member's health status, and use of social welfare services). This data will be the basis for a descriptive (quantitative) analysis of the characteristics of the sample.

"The cooperative extension team working in the New York County where the study is being conducted has already requested a copy [of the summary extension bulletin]."

— Cathy Kassab

The implications of the findings will be summarized for an extension bulletin. The cooperative extension team working in the New York County where the study is being conducted has already requested a copy. The results should help service providers identify ways in which current organizational practices can better incorporate self-care practices of low income families into their delivery systems while taking into account the limitations (i.e. financial) faced by these families. Because state and national health care policies are changing, it is important to have a better understanding of the potential consequences of various policies on this vulnerable population's ability to gain access to needed health care services.

Keywords: barriers to health care, self-care practices

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Portfolio-Based Development Policy Alternatives for the New England Economy (Research)

Government statistics suggest that some traditional agricultural activities in the New England region have declined over recent decades. To sustain their businesses, many farmers appear to be interested in public policies designed to counter such trends. Support for rural development among policy officials and the general public also is evident. Such support may be attributed, at least in part, to the perceived importance of farming in maintaining the character of the New England countryside. However, maintenance of support for significant rural development efforts among the region's non-rural residents may require more than "environmental" motives.

The Northeast Center funded a study that will attempt to demonstrate an economic basis for strengthening public policy support for important rural industries in New England. The aim is to identify a portfolio that encompasses all sectors of the regional economy and to find levels of economic activities that will serve the dual purpose of promoting growth in the region, while reducing income variability over time.

Keywords: policy alternatives, portfolio-based development, rural development

Highlights:

- This study will attempt to demonstrate the need to support public policies that can help rural businesses to reverse their current declining economic trends.

For more information about this project, contact:

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Program Development: Conflict Resolution and Public Issues Education (Extension)

"People get into each other's hair." Such is the nature of society. Conflicts are common and ubiquitous. Public conflicts—clashes among multiple parties about social issues—may threaten community cohesiveness, but they also provide *opportunities* for solving public problems in beneficial and creative ways. Extension educators sometimes help resolve public conflicts, for example, when they are facilitators, mediators and trainers in methods for conflict resolution. But knowledge is lacking about who in each state extension service is doing this work, how they are working, what they have learned from their experiences, and what support they need to become more effective. Moreover, no systematic effort exists to connect these educators or to enhance their capacity to do good work.

In April and July of 1998, the Northeast Center provided travel funds for three extension educators to participate in two meetings in Chicago, Illinois, about conflict resolution. Philip Favero, the University of Maryland, attended both the April 14-15 and July 28-29 meetings. Janet Ayres, Purdue University, attended the April meeting, and Lois Morton, Cornell University, attended the July meeting. The other regional rural development centers—the North Central, South, and West—provided financial support for six additional participants at the meetings.

Highlights:

- Extension educators met to develop a symposium on "public issues dispute resolution." A symposium in 1999 should help to connect and support extension workers who have an expertise in conflict resolution.

Ayres, Favero, and Morton met with extension educators from North Carolina State University, University of Kentucky and Washington State University to consider ways to enhance the capacity of extension educators to help resolve social conflicts. We call such work "public issues dispute resolution." Their initial effort is to develop a symposium in 1999 and are working to identify extension educators with experience in public issues dispute resolution—as conflict mediators, facilitators, and trainers—and are gauging their interest and ability to attend the symposium. The symposium will feature presentations and discussions about individual programs, and offer extension educators the *opportunity* to enhance their knowledge and ability through the exchange of information on what works and why, network building, and examinations of methods to build capacity for this activity in state extension services. We expect that those methods may include the provision of in-service training to groups of state educators, and public issues dispute resolution activities at the National Public Policy Conference and in the Community Development Society.

To create the symposium and to initiate activities afterwards, Ayres, Favero and Morten are seeking financial assistance from several sources. Possibilities include the Farm Foundation, Hewlett Foundation, regional rural development centers, and the Udall Center.

Project Team: Dr. Janet Ayres, Purdue University; Dr. Phil Favero, University of Maryland; and Dr. Lois Morton, Cornell University.

Keywords: conflict resolution, public issues education

For more information about this project, contact:

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Public Issues Education and Collaborative Problem-solving in the Northeast: Building Cooperative Extension's Capacity Through Partnerships (Extension)

REGIONAL

The dynamics of public decisionmaking at the community level have become increasingly complex. Sweeping economic, political and demographic change are combining with rapid technological advances to increase the diversity of actors with an active stake in complicated community issues. Controversy is common, and dissatisfaction with traditional public decision making is high. Current community problem-solving mechanisms often fail to deal constructively with the range of interacting interests. As a result, competing agendas and interests frequently undermine effective decisionmaking.

The Northeast Center is supporting the efforts of extension in the Northeast to identify/ develop a regional network of extension educators working in collaborative problem-solving and public issues education to link them with local decisionmakers and dispute resolution practitioners. This project is identifying where public issues

education is happening, exploring the barriers and opportunities for greater use, and fostering dialogue among these organizations at the local and regional levels.

Project Team: Cornell University: David Kay, Local Government Program; David Pelletier, Department of Nutritional Sciences; Tahnee Robertson, Program on Environmental Conflict Management; New York State Dispute Resolution Association: Lisa Hicks; Penn State: Charles Abdalla, Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology; Barbara Gray, Center for Research in Conflict and Negotiation. An advisory group of additional extension administrators, faculty, and dispute resolution practitioners also has been established to provide advice and direction throughout the project.

Keywords: collaborative problem-solving, conflict resolution, public issues education

For more information about this project, contact:

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The Cornell Local Government Program
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Http://munex.arme.cornell.edu

Highlights:

- Extension educators are working to collaborate with local decisionmakers and dispute resolution practitioners to identify public issues education locations, explore its uses, and foster greater local and regional dialogue among these organizations.

Strengthening Community: Health Solutions Notebook and Concept Mapping Process (Extension)

Don Tobias received a Northeast Center mini-grant to support his participation at the Offices of Rural Health Northeast Regional spring meeting. The meeting was held March 25-27, 1998. The mini-grant covered the purchase of forty "Community Health Solutions" notebooks, materials on the concept mapping process, travel and participation costs.

Collaborating organizations: State Offices of Rural Health in the Northeast Region.

Keywords: "Community Health Solutions," concept mapping process

For more information about this project, contact:

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Highlights:

- This mini-grant supported Don Tobias' participation in the Offices of Rural Health Northeast Regional spring meeting.

Sustainable Community Development (Extension)

PA

Highlights:

- A videotape and facilitators guide are being developed to explain sustainable community development, discuss the process and roles of local officials, stress the importance of collaborative resolution strategies, and show examples of application.

WilliamHosler received a Northeast Center mini-grant to develop avideotape presentation (videotape and accompanying facilitators guide) on sustainable community development. The videotape presentation will include a basic overview of sustainable community development, a discussion of the process, and examples of applied sustainable community development. The videotape is being designed to emphasize several points: (1) the basic concepts and process of sustainable community development, (2) the key role of local municipal officials in facilitating sustainable community development, and (3) the importance of incorporating inclusiveness and collaborative conflict resolution strategies into the process. The videotape presentation should be a helpful resource for local municipal officials.

Keywords: community development, municipal government, rural development, sustainable development

For more information about this project, contact:

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"There are many ways of thinking about the community. To most of us the word conjures up an image of a place where people live. Big places, little places, cluttered and clean, streets and houses, stores, churches, factories and farms. If we think about it for a minute, though, it's not the place or even the things there that count. It's the people, as they *live and move and have their being.*"

— Ken Wilkinson, "The Community: Its Structure and Process," featured in *Community: A Biography in Honor of the Life and Work of Ken Wilkinson* (available for $11.95 in soft-cover from the Northeast Center, 814-863-4656, or on the Web at http://www.cas.nercrd.psu.edu/community.html).

Sustainable Community Development through Environmentally and Economically Sound Sustainable Food Systems

The Northeast Center received a KEYSTONE 21 planning grant to bring together diverse organizations interested in supporting sustainable community development through environmentally and economically sound sustainable food systems in Pennsylvania. Issues and opportunities related to food supply, nutrition and food safety, commodity prices, global markets and competition, cooperatives, and sustainable agriculture were discussed. KEYSTONE 21 is a partnership among Cheyney University of Pennsylvania, The Pennsylvania State University College of Agricultural Sciences, The Pennsylvania State University Commonwealth Educational System, and the Rodale Institute Experimental Farm with funding from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation.

Project Members: Daryl Heasley and Ken Martin, Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development.

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Weeds in our Garden . . . A Farm and Home Safety Activity for Schoolage Amish Children (Extension)

PA

Unexpected injuries or accidents occur to children in all families, but Indiana County "Old Order" Amish families and, especially, the children in these families, are at a higher risk. The Amish way of life carries with it an increased risk of accidental injuries for various reasons. Many families choose to work in home operations such as farming, sawmilling and woodworking. With a large size family to care for (average number of children per family is nine) and many chores to carryout, women rely heavily on their older children to help care for their younger siblings, and they lack formal training on issues related to safety and exposure to machinery. The high use of kerosene and wood burners in this setting also poses fire and carbon monoxide hazards. With tourism on the rise, Amish families are faced with the growing problem of buggy and car and truck accidents. Amish families have limited access to telephones to call for emergency assistance or medical help, which further complicates matters. All of these issues prompted Pat Leach to think about ways she could help the Amish community reduce accident risks.

Leach received a Northeast Center mini-grant to provide a safety program for Amish children. *Weeds in Our Garden* is a farm safety coloring and activity book designed especially for Amish children. The book was developed the Northern Indiana Family Safety Committee and supported by the Indiana Rural Safety and

Highlights:

- 900 copies of a safety booklet and school materials were purchased as incentives for Amish school participation in this program to educate Amish children about farm and home injury risks.
- Work with fifteen Amish Bishops and fifteen schools will hopefully lead to implementation of this program.

Health Council and Menno-Hof Mennonite-Amish Visitors Center and other partners in the state of Indiana. Leach is working with fifteen Amish Bishops and fifteen Amish schools in Northern Indiana County [PA] to incorporate this safety program into the school curriculum. The mini-grant was used to purchase 900 copies of the safety booklet and to purchase school materials such as crayons and colored pencils to use as incentives for school participation. The ultimate goal of this project is to prevent and/or reduce farm and home injuries to Amish children and their families. We hope that the success of this program will be a starting point to do further education on safe buggy driving.

Keywords: Amish, child development, farm and home safety

For more information about this project, contact:

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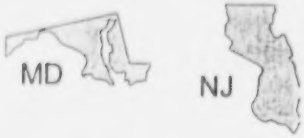
To order *Weeds in Our Garden*, contact:

Purdue University
Agricultural and Health Program
Phone: (765) 494-1191

Women, Empowerment, and Sustainable Futures: East-West Partnerships (Extension)



The Northeast Center provided travel support for two women from the region, Anne Bellows and Sylvia Ehrhardt, to present and participate in the conference *Women, Empowerment, and Sustainable Futures: East-West Partnerships*. The purpose of the conference was to foster communication and exchange among teams from Central Asia, Eastern Europe, North America, and Russia working to support women's contributions to environmental policymaking and sustainable development.

Bellows is a graduate student at Rutgers University, Center for Russian, Central and East European Studies. Her areas of work and interest are community development; food security and the human right to food; organic and sustainable agriculture; urban agriculture; and urban-rural food links.

Ehrhardt is an organic farmer in Harper's Ferry, West Virginia. She is a member of the advisory board for the Gore/Chemomydin Commission's Agriculture Committee. Her areas of work and interest include extension training and curriculum development for farmers; and sustainable and organic agriculture.

Anne C. Bellows

Report on *Women, Empowerment, and Sustainable Futures: East-West Partnerships*

As a co-organizer of the conference, and specifically—with Betty Wells (Iowa State University)—the working team on Food Systems, and as a graduate student with limited access to travel support, I am grateful to the Northeast Center for the funding to attend the *Women, Empowerment, and Sustainable Futures: East-West Partnerships* conference in Racine, Wisconsin, at the Johnson Foundation's Wingspread Conference Site, 9-12 July 1998.

Dr. Wells and I organized our working group to maximize understanding and cooperation between rural-based and urban-based groups working on food security (we interpret food security broadly within the rubric of food systems). We also believe that one of the principle outcomes of separating rural and urban aspects of food systems is a marginalization of rural farmers and food productionists' lives. Additionally it results in an illogical phenomenon of food production adjacent to urban and rural sites of hunger and malnutrition. This most heavily impacts women who are almost never counted in the US national census as farmers and who form the majority of persons needing food stamp and WIC support for basic household maintenance.

I live in New Jersey and attend Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey as an ABD, Ph.D. in geography. New Jersey has the nations' highest population density, greatest concentration of old and decaying cities and among the greatest incidence of income polarity in the country. Farmland conversion to non-farm use has rendered the "Garden State" renown into a common presumption of decaying factories and their toxic wastelands, urban strife, and webs of murderous turnpikes. In fact, New Jersey still has an important, but threatened, agricultural base. It has been my intention and my work to learn from national and international strategies to help develop secure local and regional farm production in my region and to address food security here, within the context of our own "disconnect" between hunger and food production in the same state. Further, I was looking for experience in developing safe food links between production on uncontaminated land and a population unique in its development of health problems (e.g. increased incidence of cancers, asthma, etc.) associated with toxic environments.

At the conference, I learned about several projects that will be helpful in New Jersey. Here, I will mention just two:

First is the Women, Food, and Agriculture Network coordinated by Denise O'Brien (Atlantic, Iowa) who participated in the Food Systems Team. This network provides information and network support to women who have felt their voices left out of the debates over food security.

Second is work being carried out in the Silesia region of southwest Poland. There they also have the highest population density in the country, as well as old industrial and environmentally contaminated lands on which, nevertheless, 50% lie in agricultural production. Halina Kacprzak and Maria Staniszewska presented on the work of the Gliwice [a city in Silesia] Chapter of the Polish Ecological Club. The Club strives to minimize risks of human absorption of heavy metals through, for example, developing a distribution system of organic and chemically tested foods from outside the region into Upper Silesia; and by educating farmers and gardeners on those crops that least absorb heavy metals.

Highlights:

- Anne Bellows and Sylvia Earhardt attended the conference *Women, Empowerment, and Sustainable Futures: East-West Partnerships*.
- Bellows' working group at the conference focused on maximizing understanding and working cooperation between rural- and urban-based groups working on food security issues.
- Since the conference Bellows has received a grant from the Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars for her research on residents in Poland who must produce food in contaminated soils and harvests.
- Earhardt made a presentation on Community Supported Agriculture.
- Earhardt is working on finding a sponsor for a national database for information about detoxifing polluted soils. She is also active on the President's Council on Sustainable Development's National Summit (May 1999) and a food security program in Bosnia called Forest Gardens for Counterpart International.

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"Personally, I found a wealth of new organizational strategies dynamic individuals, and surprising cultural innovations/ needs with which to address my research interests."

— Anne Bellows

The conference provided me with a programmatic and activist extension to, as well as a legitimation of, my dissertation research, "Production and Protest: Defining and Claiming Food Security in Silesia, Poland." In Silesia, economic conditions make it necessary for residents of a polluted urban environment to engage in domestic food production to protect household food security, *despite the existence of contaminated soils and harvests*. This situation was actually not uncommon among the participants at the conference. Such linkages between environments, urban food production, and food security have rarely been made. Even less common are practical strategies for the general populace that believes there are limited choices available. The conference provided a networking avenue for the fifteen participants in our Food Systems group as well as with others in the Environmental Health and Human Habitat Teams. Personally, I found a wealth of new organizational strategies, dynamic individuals, and surprising cultural innovations/needs with which to address my research interests. Since the conference I have received a grant from the Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars for four weeks of research to expand these connections within the context of my original research.

For more information about Bellow's work or the conference, contact:

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Sylvia Ehrhardt

Report on *Women, Empowerment, and Sustainable Futures: East-West Partnerships*

"I am an organic farmer and member of the advisory board for the Gore/Chernomydin Commission's Agriculture Committee and was aksed to participate in this conference because of my work with sustainable and organic agriculture, extension training, and curriculum development for farmers."

— Sylvia Ehrhardt

I am an organic farmer and member of the advisory board for the Gore Chernomydin Commission's Agriculture Committee and was asked to participate in this conference because of my work with sustainable and organic agriculture, extension training, and curriculum development for farmers. The knowledge that I have regarding these topics is of great interest to the participants from the US as well as those from eastern Europe and the countries of the former Soviet Union.

Issues of interest where I was able to contribute my knowledge and where I gained information to use on my projects, especially local ones, are as follows:

Access to food; allowing producers of food to earn a living beyond subsistence; alternatives to cash economies (safety of industry and agriculture); conscientious reduction of human impact on the environment; continued education in environmental consciousness; distribution and marketing system; ecological education; ecologically safe food; environmental health directly related to agriculture; environmental management; familiarization with the existing models of sustainable agriculture; food chains; food security and insecurity; impact of highly intensive farming on human health; importance of food systems analysis; increasing

locally grown food through Community Supported Agriculture; linking food systems to international policymaking processes; links between housing and food security; making the organic production certification system work; pesticides in ground water; promoting women as producers of food and maintaining an adequate and safe supply of food; right to information of food systems; polluted soils; use of chemicals that poison the environment; women's health and conditions of work in agriculture.

Part of each day was set aside for participants of the following three groups to work together: Group I - Links Between Health and Environment; Group II - Food Safety and Security; Group III – Use of Common Spaces.

I participated with Group II, with the goals of finding the best programs and projects among the group members (east and west), exchanging information, improving individual existing projects, networking, and building collaborative projects. This teamwork approach had a great impact on me. I was able to gather ideas and information to incorporate into my local, national and international work.

My contribution to Group II's exchange was the presentation of a marketing technique that my farm has been using since 1990—Community Supported Agriculture. This is a direct transaction between the producer and the consumer that provides the consumer with locally grown fresh, safe food directly from the producer during the entire growing season. Participants were very receptive to this marketing technique.

"My contribution to Group II's [food, safety and security] exchange was the presentation of a marketing technique that my farm has been using since 1990—Community Supported Agriculture."

— Sylvia Ehrhardt

Our group made a list of specific tasks for each participant. My task is to explore the possibilities of developing an agriculture database for detoxifing polluted soils. There is research in restoring contaminated soils in many parts of this country as well as abroad, but the information is not widely shared. There isn't a central database that anyone can plug into to find out what can be done about a specific soil contaminant. This database is needed not only in this country but worldwide, and I will look for an organization that may be willing to fund this project.

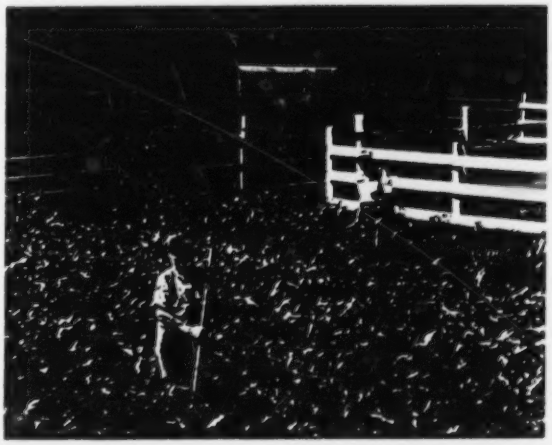
The lack of information and national support for promoting sustainable/organic food brought me to question our host at the Wingspread Conference Site, if they were serving locally grown organic food. The answer was "no." So—Anne Bellows and I composed a letter to the president of the Johnson Foundation urging him to consider doing so in the future. I know from experience how important this support can be for farmers. Working closely with organic growers, I have seen the impact they have made and continue to make on local food systems.

Linda Elswick and I are working on the President's Council on Sustainable Development's National Summit that will be held in Detroit next May. Elswick is one of the top people working on food issues. I am helping to put together a panel on community suppported agriculture for the sustainable agriculture section, and I will serve as one of the panelists.

"Linda Elswick and I are working on the President's Council on Sustainable Development's National Summit that will be held in Detroit next May."

— Sylvia Ehrhardt

I have been asked to work on a food security program in Bosnia called Forest Gardens for Counterpart International. I just returned last weekend from a trip to examine where the organization can be most effective. The program will work with the returnees, refugees, and displaced persons in the Brcko area. This will include close to 10,000 people—both Muslims and Serbs. These people have nothing but their lives left. They are returning to houses that have been bombed or destroyed.



In some areas, there aren't any trees, in others only those that are small and can't be used for firewood remain.

My counterpart will try to help the families prepare for next year's growing season. Supplies such as seeds, tools, organic gardens/agriculture plots, fruit trees, woodlots, and livestock, chickens and animals, will help these people get back on their feet and grow their own food. The women are the ones wanting to grow the food and care for the livestock. Food to buy, and money to buy it are limited. The children suffer the most with the lack of nutrients to help them grow. Gardens and fruit trees will be included in the houses that are being occupied. Woodlots and greenhouses will be added to individual communities.

At the conference I heard the plight of some of those that attended, and when I was asked to go to Bosnia, I felt that this was an important contribution to help a very bad situation come back to normal. With the knowledge of my work in Russia and the Indian Reservation, and my own experience as an organic farmer, I felt I would be able to contribute.

"The conference was an enlightening experience for me. It brought me into contact with others worldwide who are involved in important issues related to women, food and agriculture. It made me realize how important one individual can be in helping to change a situation."

— Sylvia Ehrhardt

The conference was an enlightening experience for me. It brought me into contact with others worldwide who are involved in important issues related to women, food and agriculture. It made me realize how important one individual can be in helping to change a situation.

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Keywords: environmental health, food security, organic agriculture, sustainable agriculture, women

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